Frome Urban District Council.

REPORT of the Medical Officer for the Year ending December, 1914.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

GENTLEMEN,—I have the honour to submit the report for the year 1914. In reviewing the record from a health point of view, it must at once be said that the general incidence of sickness was higher than that of the previous year, which may be attributed in part to the vagaries of weather conditions, which obtained during the later months of the year, and in part to the epidemical influences of iufluenza and scarlet fever which were rife during the same period; but in the main, it may safely be said, that the peculiar type of influenza, with the accompanying throat and chest troubles, was accountable for much of the sickness in the district, as well as in these Islands generally.

One outstanding feature in the death returns is, that not only is the death-rate higher, but that the greatest number of deaths were chiefly amongst the aged. This may be accepted as within the natural order of things. On the other hand it is lamentable to contemplate the inevitable and deplorable loss of young life in this national crisis which will have most far-reaching effects, not only in the loss of the nation's best manhood, but also in the legacies of mental and physical wrecks which will be an anxious burden on the State.

However that may be on broad issues, in the meanwhile local authorities have been impelled to accommodate various bodies of troops in their training, and the Frome Urban District were called upon to provide billets for about 4,000 troops; a far too large a number, under the conditions of billeting decided upon by the Military Authorities, but which would have been more adequately dealt with in private housing; for buildings not originally intended for human habitation, and with a lack of efficient means of ventilation, were requisitioned. But on the whole it is gratifying to note, that many of these were converted into fairly satisfactory billets, and with a minimum amount of really serious nuisance, though it could have been wished that much of the overcrowding had been avoided.

The population of Frome, according to my estimate, after allowing for an influx of workers in several industries that have increased their establisnments, and the brisk emigration that was evident before the war, is 10,917.

The area of the district is 1,214 acres, while the total number of families or separate occupiers is 2,663, which makes an average of 4·08 per house.

The various industries of the district, comprise chiefly textile, art metal and rubber manufactories, with brewing, printing and engineering, have been working well up, if not in excess of normal times, and thanks to the influx of troops the trade of the town generally has flourished considerably.

The total amount of poor-law relief for the half-year ending Michaelmas, 1914, was £966 5s., while the number of paupers on the register was 403; the relief per head of population being 9·2 per head.

The geological structure of the district consists of oolite and alluvium, while the basin constituting the sources of the Frome water supply is of carboniferous limestone.

The total amount of rainfall for the year was 43·73, and the number of days with ·01 or more of rainfall was 205. The following table shows the amount of rainfall as observed at the Egford pumping station:—

Month.	Total Depth.	Greatest Fall in 24 hours.		No. of Days with ·01 or more recorded
	Inches.	Inches.	Date.	
Jan.	1·05	·43	29	13
Feb.	4·61	1·21	17	20
March	6·00	1·12	8	24
April	1·88	·44	5	11
May	1·70	·45	3	17
June	1·67	·70	9	8
July	3·65	·76	19	19
Aug.	3·46	·68	3	14
Sept.	2·06	·88	10	14
Oct.	3·57	·53	25	17
Nov.	4·81	·80	2	23
Dec.	9·27	1·37	28	25
Total	43·73			205

The water supply to the town has been well maintained and is of excellent quality, the gathering area is assumed on the limestone outcrop on the Mendips, of about an area of 4 square miles. The average consumption is 32·07 gallons per head per day.

Drainage.

Much and coustant attention has been given to the improvement of house drainage, numbers of defective systems have been replaced. The whole of the town is practically served by water closets, and every endeavour is made to supply each house with a w.c. for the exclusive use of the inmates.

The scavenging of the district is carried out by the Council's workmen. House refuse being collected weekly, aud conveyed to the destructor where it is used for raising steam.

Sanitary Inspection, etc.

The sanitary condition of the district is remarkably good, and full particulars of the inspections under the Public Health and Housing Act which is embodied in your Inspector's report will be laid before the Council at a later date.

There are 2 licensed and 9 registered slaughter-houses in the district. These have been regularly inspected and are in a satisfactory condition.

The total number of bakehouses is 21, inspections are made regularly.

There are 36 factories and 37 workshops. The number of out-workers are 44, while the nature of the out-work consists chiefly of glove and silk-tie making.

Sanitary Administration of District.

The following Adoptive Acts are in force within the district:—The Public Health Amendment Act 1890; the Public Health Amendment Act 1907, sec. 1 to 38, 3 to 47, 49, 60, 62 to 66, 68 to 77 part 8 and sec. 95, and the Infectious Diseases Prevention Act 1890.

A Local Government Board enquiry has been held to consider the improvement of the plant at the Water Works Pumping Station.

Isolation Hospital.

Owing to the epidemic of scarlet fever and to the lack of accommodation in the existing hospital, Garston Cottage was temporarily procured to meet the difficulty. There were 27 treated in this hospital. The following is a list of the infectious diseases notified during the year:—Erysipelas, 6; scarlet fever, 30; pulmonary tuberculosis, etc., 24; ophthalmia neonatorum, 1.

Vital Statistics.

The total number of births registered during the year was 191, as against 156 in 1913; 179 in 1912; 188 in 1911; 183 in 1910; and 184 in 1909.

The male births numbered 98 and the female 93.

There were 9 illegitimate births during the year.

The birth-rate works out at 17·49 per 1,000 of the population. In 1913 it was 14·28; in 1912 it was 16·42; in 1911 it was 17·06; and in 1910 it was 16·25.

Infant Mortality.

There were 17 deaths from stated causes at various ages under one year. In 1913 there were 12 deaths; in 1912 there were 12 deaths; and in 1911 there were 16 deaths.

CAUSES OF INFANTILE DEATHS.

Whooping Cough	3
Abdominal Tuberculosis	1
Pneumonia	2
Diarrhœa	1
Atelechasis	1
Congenital Malformations and Premature Birth	7
Malignant Disease	1
Other Causes	1

The total number of deaths registered in 1914 was 155, in 1913 it was 124, in 1912 it was 149, and in 1911 it was 179.

42 deaths have been registered from public institutions.

The death-rate is calculated on an estimated population of 10,917.

	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.
The general death-rate per 1,000 living	12·25	17·52	14·87	11·08	14·56
Infantile death-rate per 1,000 births ...	76·5	86·02	67·04	76·92	89·00

The following are tables of ages and causation, tabulated in the same order and under the same headings as those adopted by the Registrar-General.

I.

	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.
Under 1 year	16	12	12	17
From 1 to 5 years ...	6	6	4	9
,, 5 to 15 years ...	3	2	0	2
,, 15 to 25 years ...	6	5	4	5
,, 25 to 45 years ...	18	2	15	11
,, 45 to 65 years ...	44	50	36	39
Over 65 years ...	86	72	53	72
	179	149	124	155

II.

	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.
Measles	0	0	3	0
Whooping Cough ...	2	0	0	4
Influenza	0	1	2	4
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	7	9	10	6
Tuberculous Meningitis	1	1	0	1
Other Tuberculous Diseases	3	2	0	2
Cancer, Malignant Disease	15	18	11	8
Bronchitis	12	6	5	8
Pneumonia (all forms)	17	11	6	11
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs ...	1	2	4	6
Organic Heart Disease	—	—	—	22
Diarrhœa and Enteritis	4	0	4	2
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	1	0	2	0
Cirrhosis of Liver, etc.	4	1	1	3
Nephritis and Bright's Disease	7	1	3	5
Congenital Debility and Malformations, including Premature Birth	8	7	5	7
Violent Deaths, excluding Suicides ...	3	2	2	6
Suicides	0	0	1	3
Other Defined Diseases	94	88	65	57
	179	149	124	155

I wish to thank you gentlemen for your cordial sympathy and indulgence, also do I wish to thank your officers for their valuable assistance and close co-operation in the difficult and trying circumstances during the later months of the year.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

ALBIN SEDDON.

April 7th, 1915.

Frome Urban District Council.

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer

For the Year 1914.